

ミナト

能者  
れいのうしや

葉山透  
Tohru Hayama







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# Reinousha Minato - Volume 01 Chapter 01

## Part 1-5

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# Illustration



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# Chapter 1 - Jealousy

## Prologue[\[edit\]](#)

There is a confinement area in the centre of the city for hito-shirazu[1].

There wasn't a clear record if the people in town was forbidden to enter the area. However, the people has been faithfully continued to protect it.

The grove of hito-shirazu was about 100 sq. meter in area with 10s meter length park-like place, the trees were tall, and within the forest there were a lot of trees branches flourishing, which appears more like of a small forest than a grove. This view couldn't be known unless one has step into the location itself.

At the centre of which, is a sacred tree called death, although none of the locals has ever seen it before. There hasn't even anyone who dares to walk within 50 meters of its proximity. That is the place where hito-shirazu lives.

"Hmm, it really is located in the middle of the city"

The one who said that is a group of young men in their twenty. It was around midnight, and there was not a hint of shadow from other human in the vicinity.

"Doesn't it resembles Yahata no Yobashirazu[2] in Chiba Prefecture? The Spirited-away legend is also similar"

"Spirited away, is it? I guess it's only a myth to keep people off the ground"

Several male student stood before the confinement area while taking pictures with their camera with a mocking laughter.

"Then, from this point onward, let's start the field research of Meisan University Occult Study Group"

They didn't realize in their noise, but there was no other sound in the vicinity. It might be a small town, but in the centre of the town, it was quite common to hear one or two sounds of car engine or something else, yet there was none. Even the sound of insects was hushed.

"We're going in from this side"



There was a gate surrounded by a tight row of racks. The youngsters climbed the racks and delved across the chain while laughing.

Once they got inside, the atmosphere completely changed. The trees were tall, and the atmosphere surrounding them seemed to oppress them. The starry sky was not visible as their visions were obstructed by the dense branches.

Since there was no light getting through, the darkness of the night was felt deeper. Were it not for the flashlight, they wouldn't even know which direction to go.

"As expected, the atmosphere is different"

Despite being swallowed by the atmosphere; they went further in and were enjoying the strolls. After walking for some 20 meters, they found something strange. It was a piece of combined giant trees.

"Isn't this amazing?"

2 big curved trees, stood at 7-8 meters had been entwined with each other like a snake. It was arched in a manner that made them look like a giant gate.

"I wonder how they make this. It's not like this is a different cold country, it's unnatural for it to grow this way"

The tree trunks were extending against the gravity. It was not normal for them to be bent at near ninety degrees.

"Isn't it done by changing the direction to fit this shape? Just like a bonsai. It'll take few decades to do this"

"I see. Some shrine pines have pretty weird shape too. They were growing for hundreds of years, so it may seem natural in some sense"

"But, this one makes a great picture. Look at this. I posted in the blog, I wonder how will the response be"

One of the youngsters enthusiastically raised his small liquid crystal panel camera, and walk closer to the front of the giant tree.

"Despite being a confined area, the shimenawa[3] is still brand new. Well, I guess this is a scam"

There was a shimenawa at the height of the waist stretched between the 2 gigantic trees.

As he said, the shimenawa attached on the trees did not look worn out at all, it was unnaturally looked new. The shide[4] attached along the shimenawa also seemed to be untouched by the weather. On the surface of the shimenawa, there were both characters and symbols drawn closely together, in an orderly manner.

“Ah, then, this is the border of the living world and the world of the dead. Those people who were spirited away had gone pass through this tree-gate”

“There’s such meaning to shimenawa? I thought it is just a decoration”

"You guys, what are you doing here!"

Suddenly, there was a voice shouting from their back.

When they looked back, there was a teenage girl. It was as if a flower has emerged, wrapped with a bright red and white clothes in the midst of the night. Her long hair hung down at the front and was flutteringly blown by the wind. Despite the childlike appearance of her face, the crease on her eyebrows definitely showed her anger.

“You must not touch that!”

However, the youngsters disregarded the fact that she was angry. After all, a beautiful girl appeared in the middle of nowhere at such wee hour, they were excited to meet the mysterious girl, which caused them to raise the volume of their noise.

“Dude, it’s a real Miko-san[5]. Are you perharps, someone from here?”

“You’re really cute. How old are you? What’s your name?”

They gathered around the girl in no time, they surrounded her body from all direction unreservedly.

“I’m Yamagami Saya. This is a confined area. This is not a place where you should wander around indiscriminately. Please go away before you awaken the one who slumbered in this land”

Even after the girl named Yamagami Saya pointed out the way out, they didn’t



seem to hint any action towards that direction.

“Out of the blue? Hahahaha, what the heck”

“You’re here too, aren’t you?”

“Hey, miko-san, are you a professional? Don’t you feel cold dressed like that? Or perhaps, you were intending to go to have your business in the water? Then, shall we go together now?”

Saya gritted the back of her teeth after listening the youngsters poked fun at her with unfamiliar words for her.

“Hey, what’s that?”

One of the youngster noticed a long rod which hangs at Saya’s back. It was a bow with a length of more than one meter. When Saya took the bow by her hand, it was firm, as if its core was made out of cold steel.

“Don’t you know about Azusayumi[6]? This bow is used for quelling wild spirit”

“How do you use it when you don’t have any arrow? Isn’t it totally opposite with the holy arrow?”

“Azusayumi has no arrow. And the string looks like a guitar’s string”

The more knowledgeable young man explain to his friends.

Right at that time, Saya seemed to notice something and directed her line of sight to the big tree where the realm of the dead bordered, behind the group of young men. She stiffened, before mustering a force to the hand which was wielding the bow.

“Hey, hey, miko-san, aren’t this place famous for spirited away legend? Can you do a little trial for us?”

One person started to run toward the shimenawa. Everyone had guessed what he was trying to do. This time, the youngsters were having so much fun fooling around. Saya ran hurriedly toward the young man to stop him, but she hardly could close the distance between them.

“oops”

The guy who ran hooked his leg in attempt to leap over the rope, he was

staggering before safely landing his foot on the other side. His friends sighed in relief when he managed to do it.

“My bad, I tore it up. Ah, how if we bring this back as a souvenir, how about this shimenawa? We can add this to our clubroom’s collection. Since it’s torn anyway, it will be more useful if we take it away right”

While delivering such theory, he was trying to pull the shimenawa attached to the other tree by brute force. Saya hurriedly came to stop him.

“Please stop!”

Saya seized the rope, while trying to tie the other end of the rope to the tree.

“Won’t you give us that, for our collection?”

Everyone laughed, except Saya. Saya was stunned and pale, she immediately shouted to the laughing youngsters after she saw that the shimenawa was torn.

“Quickly, quick, flee from here!... Qu-“

Her cry was interrupted. The characters on the surface of the shimenawa began to move like a dynamic creatures to Saya’s hand which has been holding the shimenawa.

The character danced like small insects as the shimenawa stuck to part of Saya’s skin. The shimenawa, which was supposedly new, was crumbling soon after. It was as if she was watching a fast-forwarded video.

“How can this happen---“

Saya slumped down. A vertical light emerged from the centre of the two giant trees. The light spread gradually to the surrounding. As if an invisible gate is going to open.

“Ah, aaa----“

Everyone was speechless before the phenomenon. There was another dimension emerging in the midst of the giant trees. Behind it, something was wriggling, though they were not able to open their eyes since the light which cut out the night was too intense for them.

Despite the dazzling light, the foul odour instantly spread out, choking

everyone present with nausea.

“Tsk”

In Saya’s hand, a black arrow which wasn’t existed till just now emerged. She pulled her Azusayumi with the black arrow in it, and aim towards the torrent of light.

She has an unexpected amount of force despite her small body and slender arms, pulling the bow to its limit.

The light grew stronger. The foul stench worsen, and they couldn’t hold their breath forever.

The Meisan University Occult Study Group members who were about to be swallowed up in the vortex of light screamed.

Saya released her arrows in the centre of the light in a straight line.



# Part 1[[edit](#)]

Several siren rang in the morning at Okura City.

Police cars and ambulance gathered around the centre of the town where hito-shirazu lives. Many onlookers were observing it fearfully from afar.

“Here. We can still make it in time”

The ambulance crew came running while carrying someone on a stretcher. From which an arm fell loosely hanging to the ground with hints of dripping blood.

Outside of the yellow-coloured off-limit tape, the policemen were shouting that nobody could enter the area.

The onlookers were standing at the side of the road where the asphalt was gouged out. From the hole, the ground was broken and water was gushing out from a ruptured water pipe at the particular spot.

It was overturning the cars, crushing the trucks, tearing the guardrail and causing the canal to collapse, it was destroying the city as if it was an explosion.

The very same scene was also appeared in the television cameras from the reporters.

“It’s the scene of accident that occurred in Okura City this morning. As you can see, the confusion can be seen clearly, as the authority couldn’t confirm the safety in the area. Neither the police nor the fireman is able to identify the cause of the 100 meters road failure, whether it was due to tornado, terrorism, they even mentioned some random speculation like land subsidence, the residences around the periphery...”

At the reporter and camera blind spot, a strange group was heading to the place of hito-shirazu of Shinto. There were 3 women in the centre, wearing a miko outfit. While a crowd of men walk surrounding them, as if protecting them, was wearing a pale blue-green-coloured clothes, only the chief priest has the right to wear a green coloured robe.

When the stiff looking mikos reached the place of hito-shirazu, the police officer who stood by the doorway confronted them.

“This is an off limit area. Please turn away”

Despite encountering the strange group, he did not forget his own duties. However, when the miko in the centre issued a document, the police officer immediately changed his attitude.

“We are dispatched from the central shrine to help, my name is Mizutani Risako. We have obtained permission”

“I-I’m sorry. Please proceed”

The woman named Mizutani Risako nodded lightly to the police officer and slipped through his side. She couldn’t fully conceal her impatience which was clearly visible to the police man.

“As I thought...”

Risako got on to the front of the giant tree where the border of the living lies, she muttered so in a hoarse voice.

Not only the road outside, the ground inside hito-shirazu quarter was also torn apart in a straight line through their warehouse up to the centre of the giant trees. However, it stopped right in front of the giant trees. Rather than the giant tree itself, the collapse of the ground might be caused by an unknown force.

There were quite a number of bloodstains on the ground surrounding the trees, and hence, some police officers had to do site inspection. There were white lines traces scattered on the ground. However, most of them only consisted of the upper body part of a human.

“Kuchinashi-sama, we’ve found the details about the victims”

One of the priest who had listened about the situation from police officers were reporting to Risako.

“There are victims beside the dispatched priests”

“Do you mean that outsiders had slipped in?”

“Yes. We found their student cards. They seem to be in an amateur occult

study group from university”

“.... I see”

Risako who belongs to the Shinto sect was given the name of ‘Kuchinashi-sama[11]’, despite her youth, she brought a title which is considered as a high-level in the world. Thanks to a number of Specter-related incident that she must solve in the past, she had gotten used to seeing grotesque scene since she was young.

Some of the Specters were adorable as if it had come out of fairy tale, yet there were some others which were extremely cruel, like a mutilated corpse of human. There were cases where she had to face invisible being, or even cases where she was being possessed by spirit.

Brutality and mystery were her bread and butter. Yet, this incident still considered a large scale, even for her who is supposed to be used to such event.

However, she couldn’t seem to act calmly as per usual.

“So, have you managed to find all of their corpse?”

The last words of her sentences were slightly voiced out with a lower volume.

“No, Yamagami Saya’s body is not found”

“I see”

On the outside, Risako appeared to be calm as usual, but when she stood between the 2 giant sacred trees, her face immediately stiffened.

“What about this?”

She found some rotten pieces of things which fell on the ground, Risako expression was darkened.

“The wreckage of shimenawa.. As I thought, the seal has been released”

However, the shimenawa which she held felt strange. She couldn’t make it out by words, but there was something missing from it. When Risako was trying to remember it, the bushes beside her was bustling.

Risako eyes quickly turned to that direction, before widened up in surprise. The next moment, Risako ran to the centre of the bushes without giving a second



glance.

“Saya!”

From the back of the hito-shirazu, there was a figure of a wounded girl who miraculously still able to stand on her own. When Risako closed in to the place where she stood, the girl’s body fell down in her arm due to exhaustion.

“Saya, be strong Saya”

Saya muttered something and opened her eyes faintly, it was not loud enough to be heard clearly. Saya immediately lose her consciousness soon after she entrusted her body to Risako.

Risako showed a relieved expression when she heard breathing sound and heartbeats from the body she was holding in her arms. However, when she saw Saya’s arm, which was hanging loosely over the shoulder, her expression changed completely.

“This is...”

Looking at Saya’s arm, Risako felt an uncomfortable feeling that was missing out from the shimenawa’s wreckage.

The shimenawa which was used for sealing, supposed to have Iruka-type of jindaimoji[8] written on its surface.

Iruka has twelve vowels, which pronunciation method is not known. Looking at its pattern, it has less characters than of modern linguistic. Even within the mystical Jindaimoji which said to have particular power, Iruka possesses a greater power, which has been used as a secret characters for curses and seals.

However, the character had disappeared from the wreckage of the shimenawa.

Instead, the creepy Iruka characters was written on Saya’s pale right arm.

## Part 2[[edit](#)]

The influence of Shinto has gone a long way.

The details are unknown, but one of the oldest documents 'Iki' is stored in Shinto Branch at Fuji, is recorded from the era of Asuka. They were collected around Heian era, more than a thousand years from the date they were written.

The name was ordered alphabetically[9] in subset 'Roki', 'Haki', 'Niki', from the original order 'I-Ro-Ha-Ni-Ho-He-To'.

The language of iroha was based on a song which was produced with the basic of Buddhism's impermanence, there was no other language could be deemed more worthy to tell the history of Shinto. However, despite the help of Shintoism, there was phrases which intersects with Buddhism's core values.

Their mission is to subdue the Specter.

Those who make enmity with people, or harming people, will be sealed or destroyed.

The author of the song of Iroha itself is unknown, although there was a hypothesis that one particular monk's initial like Koubou Daishi Kuukai might be the author. Although it was consistent with the timing of 'Iki' which has been concluded, the Kuukai theory was mostly nulled, as the song of Iroha is said to be created in a later time.

Even so, the existence of 'Iki' or 'Roki' are intriguing. They were originated from an intriguing history as well.

In any case, as the aid of Shintoism never appeared in the spotlight of history, the authority could not use them to verify the history either. They were just exist in order to subdue the Specters. Therefore, sometimes, they make a seemingly ruthless decision.

"We can only offer Saya's life"

The solemn-sounding voice was heard from one of the corner of the room. It was a voice of one from a dozen men who hid their faces behind a white head

robe.

The sight of the white hoods in the dimly lit rooms appear to float absent-mindedly.

Risako who was sitting down in the middle of the room, was forcing herself to speak in an emotionless voice.

“I can return the exact words to you, Kaonashi-sama[10]. The spectre was unsealed is not to be blamed to Saya. It was due to the mindless people who tried to cross over the border of death. Such punishment is too harsh”

As the Kuchinashi[11], Risako’s mouth was hidden , hence, her voice was a little muffled.

“Don’t take me wrongly. It is not a punishment. We have no other choice. Our opponent is not a mere lowly figure, but a spectre who once worshipped as a god. It is hard to seal him as is even with our full force”

“It was written in the ‘Ruki’ of the song that he is a jealous one. He was turned into a spectre soon after he fell from his shrine. We cannot hold a candle against him with our current state. Not against something who can absorbed the power of 100 people”

“That seal which was created by the power of hundreds, was passed on to Yamagami Saya. The character of Jindaimoji, the 2047 characters of Iruka is embedded in the right arm of the miko”

“I understood. However, Yamagami Saya is a valuable resource which can stand against a god”

“Who coincidentally is your niece. She is your sister’s keepsake after all. Do you mix your feeling in asserting this decision?”

“That...”

Risako couldn’t utter a word.

“Give up. It’s our mission. The seal has been transferred to Saya, it’s a blessing in disguise. Albeit being a cruel reality to you.

He didn’t say a ruthless thing. It was unavoidable. Risako herself knows that very well.



The previous generation also couldn't hold a candle against him even with their full force, the spectre was only sealed after paying many sacrifices as the pricey expense. For the sake of their relatives, several people made human sacrifice, and it was banned to make such a new seal.

"We must return the spectre to the realm of the death"

"It's unforgivable for a spectre to be present in this world"

The group of men who were called 'Kaonashi' stood up at once.

"This is the end of discussion"

Risako waited the Kaonashis to depart while biting her lip.

When their footsteps ceased, Risako raised her head fearfully.

"There's still me"

One of the kaonashi spoke out. Risako was surprised as there were no sign of his presence, and return to prostration in a hurry.

"Ye-Yes"

"Raise your head"

She rose her face, in the dimly lighted room, she caught the reflection Saya's appearance.

"There's no denying that Saya has been blessed with an unexpected prize. She has 5 to 6 days. Sadly to say, it should be enough time for you to say goodbye" After saying the words of sympathy, he resigned. Just like that, the last presence disappeared as well.

"Kuchinashi-sama"

After the both of them were left alone, Saya kept her bowing[12] posture and began to talk.

"I'm terribly sorry for this incident. I have prepared myself, please use my body..."

"Saya, look at me"

Saya raised her face, and stared at Risako for sometime, before hesitatingly

smiled lightly at her.

“Risa anesama”

It was the first time in five years that she was called by her own name. Saya’s preparedness was visible involuntarily.

When Saya became a miko at 11 years old, even if they were close relative, a strict hierarchical relationship was adopted. As Saya was a priest, she was not allowed to call Risako, who is a higher up, with her real name, she must call her Kuchinashi-sama. Regardless of the situation, Saya always seriously obey this teaching.

“Risa anesama..... I’m sorry”

Despite showing such courage, Saya spilled tears down her cheek.

In Risako’s mind, the memories of a young girl in her beautiful sister’s arms laughing innocently came up, she was a precious keepsake from her sister. When her sister died, she hugged the little Saya, and vowed to protect her.

“Don’t give up, Saya. There’s still...”

There should be a way to survive, she cut short her sentence.

She didn’t think of it. Giving Saya irrational hope in the midst of her resolution was cruel.

The only path of Shinto that could give a conclusion to this case. Spiritual power, ethereal, supernatural powers, she couldn’t even save Saya with her own power.

Then, there was no other choice but to ask of help from someone who didn’t meet all those criteria.

Even though she supposed to deny the path which he treads.

Risako has an idea of the only man who can do that.

That person’s name is Kujou Minato.

## Part 3[\[edit\]](#)

I think each one of them is an idiot.

To have a faith, to honor the gods, to live in such humility. Believing that the power you have to subdue the specters comes from Buddha.

It's a silly teaching. Akabane Yuuki has not belived nor honoured the gods since he was born. Yet, his spiritual power is stronger than anyone else, since he was young.

He can see what others cannot since he was a baby. As he is able to see them just like human, car, and bugs, he never thought that they were scary.

When he was 3 years old, he shook off the ugly black thing who was behind his grandmother with a sword toys, and it was gone in an instant.

When his grandmother saw it, she hugged Yuuki and said that he had the same blessing from the gods as his mother and grandfather.

However, his kind grandmother died from a disease, and Yuuki became alone. One of Akabane's relative conducted the funeral, although there was the organization which help him to conduct it, amongst the condolence caller there was a strange monk.

He heard from this strange monk who claimed that they were from the head temple, that his grandfather and mother were also a famous spiritual user. However, Yuuki's grandfather and mother died in accident abruptly when Yuuki was a baby.

Neither their religiousity nor the Buddha protected their family.

On the contrary, the power which supposed to be bestowed from the gods has isolate Yuuki.

He can learn and memorize difficult arts very quickly

He can figure out the proper use of a spell at a glance too.

He sometimes could defeat a spectre who couldn't even be seen by dozens of monk who had been training fo years.

However, the voices that he hears are these.

--- You can only fly high in your small island, there are bigger claws waiting to prey upon you.

How noisy.

--- Keep your bark. You're still in our protection after all. Annoying child like you will come back crying in the end.

You speak well despite doing nothing but recite in the back while you fight with the spectre.

For those who belived in the illusion of increasing spiritual power after years of training, his existence was an eyesore. He has become a source of jealousy and inferiority complex to them.

Just because of that, the head temple became noisy.

Seems like he was seen as a business rival for Shinto. Incidents related to specters which were supposed to be buried underground, turned into major events which couldn't be contained from the media anymore.

With the name of 'hito-shirazu', they have the opportunity to intervene with the investigation, it was a sordid idea of a high priest who want to show off ourselves by stealing the credits. They carry neither humility nor honor, seems like they only carry their god's honor.

There's no point in lying low in this kind of shitty organization.

As a child himself, the only things I can't do are back dealings with the media and police, and the negotiations with the clients. He has no interest in money. That kind of things are better left in the hands of adults.

Amongst the hito-shirazu's rank, the number of specters he had got rid of has surpassed the others, Shinto and the head temple could no longer ignore his presence. Not only that he has silenced the incompetent members, his power is also respected, so he was granted more freedom in his movements. If he think about it, whether he stays doesn't affect him at all.

He was wearing his favorite jumper and a baseball cap. Upon exiting the room, his brown hair shook behind his hat after the wind.

“The spectre from hito-shirazu’s grove, is it?”

In front of Yuuki was a monk in his late twenties. The monk’s name is Arata Kougen. Despite his youth, he holds a high position in the head temple, he was a spiritual user which primarily responsible for public relation. He was also one of the people who would listen to Yuuki properly.

His power has the nickname of ‘temple of mugwort lantern at noonday’, but for him to actually acknowledge a kid like Yuuki was quite formidable, at least Yuuki thought so.

Since he was in charge of external liaison, he was unlike other monks who trained to recite words of spells in humble, he has an informal atmosphere and a soft demeanor.

“You mean you want to defeat the spectre by yourself?”

Kougen was supposed to make a trouble face, yet somehow it turned to be a surprised face.

“Are you going to say that it’s impossible for a kid, and you better go to sleep early?”

“No, no, not at all”

Kougen with his kind face, nod several times in affirmation.

“I think Yuuki-kun might be able to defeat it. I can understand Yuuki-kun’s feeling as well. I want to cooperate with you, but we also have to maintain the relationship with the Shinto. The head temple is quite straightforward in this matter, so I cannot afford to move”

The reason was a legitimate one. As expected, it was impossible. Soon after Yuuki’s shoulders dropped in disappointment,

“that was how it’s supposed to be”

With that, Kougen’s finger swung left and right.

“I’m also surprised. I was about to ask Yuuki-kun for a favour, right before you ask me if you can get rid of it just now”

This time, it was Yuuki’s time to be surprised.

“I have been requested for a help. Both the head temple and the Shinto want to resolve this incident before innocent humans become victims. You’re going to protect them against the spectre if you’re to be involved in this mission”

“protection means, it won’t be my credit”

Yuuki with his sharp mouth, didn’t even try to hide his displeasement. However, Kougen’s reaction was purely opposite.

“It’s alright. Since you’ll be working with him, the chance for you to show off your power won’t be gone. After all, he cannot use any spell nor spiritual power. That’s because...”

Kougen smiled before finishing his sentence.

“He is Kujou Minato. The zero ability person”



## Part 4[\[edit\]](#)

Kougen was heading to a deserted building in the back alley of a street. He nudged the trash scattered by crows in the street, even though it was daytime, there were drunken people and others scary-looking people, and women who put on flashy make up to attract attentions.

“He prefers this kind of place after all”

Yuuki watched his surrounding warily, and Kougen said the preference of the person they were going to meet just in time.

“What do you mean as preference? A person who prefers a place like this, less likely to be credible”

“He said this condition has the best merit for him”

Yuuki asked in frustration while kicking empty cans of beer which rolled to his foot.

“This Kujou Minato guy, he doesn’t have any spiritual power, but he is hated since he come to debug our work?”

“I can’t deny that, but”

Kougen stroked his chin with a troubled face.

“But the Shintou and the head temple arrived in the same solution, currently only that man may be able to cast a different solution”

“Why? Despite the jealousy and stuff, as long as he can defeat the spectre, is good enough right?”

“It is not so easy of a situation”

Before long, Kougen arrived at his destination, it was a 7 storeys apartment, multi-tenanted building, with mediocre appearance. There was an illegal looking financing corp, and a worndown clinic lined with dingy sign board, the first storey looked like a café, yet the master was sleeping in the table as a make-do bed.

Nobody would come to this café to eat even by mistake, and no one would want to have anything to do with the doctor either. The suspicious financial corp too, was unthinkable.

“He’s at the top storey”

No human being lives in this building could be a decent one, Yuuki had already started to feel some disappointment.

“Does he really live in a place like this?”

After noticing the yellow poster which said ‘in maintainance’, Yuuki sighed while both of them started to climb the stairs to the 7th floor.

“Certainly, I can’t say that he’s a good human, but it doesn’t necessarily mean that he’s incompetent”

“Even though his nickname is Zero Ability Person?”

Ahaha, he took the first point, Kougen laughed before turned his face straight.

“His method to counterattack spectres is a little special. Thanks to that, both the Shinto and head temple were in favour to nickname him as Zero Abilith Person”

Both of them climbed the stairs while gasping for their breath.

On the third floor’s stair case landing area, there were empty beer bottle cases rolling around, and a nasty smelling paper bag, on the fourth floor there were a mountain of cardboard documents collapsing around the stairs, as if it were a garbage collection point. It’s likely to be better of jumping out of the windows in emergency.

“It’s impossible to even scare away the spectre if he doesn’t even have any spiritual power. To seal the spectre itself, he must have some trick. It’s obviously cheating”

Choking from the smoke of tobacco, Yuuki was disappointed further when he saw that the interior of the building was dirtier than the outer appearance, he let out a final violent protest to the decision. Kougen who had been looking upward suddenly turned to stare at Yuuki with a serious face.

“That’s a thinking way that unexpectedly different from your style, Yuuki-kun.

There's no one that would be happy if all his hard work is being denied. I'm sure you understand this?"

Yuuki stopped his step in instant. Kougen's words were also applicable to Yuuki's circumstances. Only he, is willing to admit Yuuki's ability and not call him a fool despite Yuuki's age. He also listen to him properly.

If it was someone whom he believed this much, I guess it's fine to try to see him once. There might be a possibility that he's just like me, a person on the wrong side since he was born with power.

Yuuki felt the beatings in his chest quicker. It was not due to climbing up the stairs. By nature, he has a strong feet to climb the stairs.

"Then, is he for real?"

With a higher expectation, he made such question to Kougen. However, Kougen laughed gently in reply.

"You need to decide that for yourself"

"We've arrived. It's here"

There was no writing at the door. The light bulb attached on the ceiling was flashing.

"Kujou-san, I'm coming in"

Kougen opened the door without knocking, he went in as if it was his own place.

"What's with this smell?"

The room was full of awful smell, Yuuki covered his face by his hand. Kougen was blinking his eyes. A layer thin of white smoke was drifting around the dark room.

"Yo-yo- yoo"

A voice with a bad articulation was heard from the corner of the room. He is a young adult who were limping on the couch.

"Minato-kun! Are you alright?"

Kougen placed his luggage on the table in a hurry, and rushing to embrace the

man who fell down.

The man who was called Minato opened his hollow mouth and sloppily spilled some drools. He was in a dirty black T-shirt with shabby jeans. He couldn't even be seen as a decent guy, even at best, Yuuki's face was vividly disappointed after all his expectations were dashed.

"What happen? What exactly had happened?"

When Kougen grabbed the nape of his neck, Minato smiled back scruffily, and showed something like a leave in his hand.

"Here, this... I was experimenting"

Minato stood up and turned over the table unsteadily. He didn't even care that Kougen's bag and its contents were scattered to the floor, he fell down while staggering after attempting to stand on it.

"Experiment?"

Kougen opened a window to replace the air in the room. The strange smelled smoke flows outside.

"I tried to grow it on the rooftop. But it didn't grow properly, but I was trying to dry it up and smoke them"

The supposedly homemade cigar in Minato's hand were spreading a smoke smell into the room. Kougen sighed deeply and held his head.

"Did you just say that you bring your friends to do this on the rooftop?"

"who knows"

"It's prohibited to plant this in Japan"

"Probably"

"So it's marijuana"

"He asked an exorcist to smoke marijuana , how funny"

Minato laughed to his dry puns, but quickly holding his mouth while his face turning blue. He rushed to the bathroom in a hurry (to barf). For a while only such distasteful sounds were heard. Yuuki was staring coldly to Kougen, while Kougen pretended not to notice him. When Minato came out of the toilet after a

while, he drew water from the washroom to wash his head and face.

“Ah, what a bad feeling”

While wiping his wet head, he came back to the room, where he showed a reaction that he noticed Kougen and Yuuki for the first time.

“Kougen? Why are you here? Did something happen?”

“Before that, I’m going to dispose of this”

Kougen dumped the dried leaves in the sink of the washroom.

“Ah, what am I going to do. I’ve promised the moneylender downstairs, you know”

“I don’t care about such rotten moneylender”

“Well, I don’t care. So, keep quiet about this”

Minato frankly backed down, he torned the leaves of ornamental plants on the corner of the room which was about to wither, and wrapped it in newspaper.

“so, why are you here?”

After he finished wrapping up the torn leaves with the newspaper, Minato finally turned his attention toward Kougen.

“I want to ask a favour from you...”

“If it’s for covering up the blunder of Shinto and the grove of hito-shirazu, I’m going to reject your request. Do you think I’m a baby sitter? If you want a babysitter, look for other people”

He pointed to the door, between them, there was a wornout sofa with its content scattered out.

“I’m glad to meet you after such a long time. The way back is ther. Sayonara”

Yuuki moved toward the door before Kougen.

“Kougen-san, let’s go back. This kind of criminal-looking man is not worth it”

Yuuki stood up and pressed him, yet Kougen asked Minato back.

“Wait a minute. Minato-kun, how do you know about hito-shirazu’s incident?”

“I’m a youkai[14] who can read mind. I can read people’s mind”

Yuuki clicked his tongue to Minato’s grin.

“I just happen to read the incident from the news. How am I going to survive if I can’t even conclude as much”

“Hey, the brat over there. You can doubt me, but listen to someone’s word properly. I’m not lying. I can read mind”

Kougen re-attempt the conversation, he sat on the sofa which had a different colour than the one which was torn on the opposite direction. However, before he even sat down, Minato opened his mouth again.

“The seal was savely transferred to a miko, huh. I don’t hate a schoolgirl, but I don’t feel any meaning behind saving a 16 years old girl who easily throw away her life for this”

Suddenly straight to the point, this has left Kougen speechless.

“I don’t want to do that for Shinto even if I’m paid. If Risako want to clean up this mess, she should have meet me personally. Why would she need to do this in such a roundabout way”

“How do you know?”

For him to know this far, while the only person within the temple who should know about Risako’s request was Kougen’s alone. Minato could not possibly know this since yesterday. However, Minato grinned without answering Kougen, while peering naturally at Kougen’s face.

“Wait a minute. You really can see, don’t you?”

Kougen tried to cover up about the matter, Minato began to talk with his finger placed on his forehead.

“hmm, what is this about? So that miko-san will sanctify herself from the uncleanness for 5 days, before she heads to death? What a coincidence. I just heard that the life span of the moneylender old man downstairs is also about a week, due to cancer.”

Yuuki who had doubted Minato, took interest when Minato managed to say about the details of the problem out of no where, and sat down next to Kougen.



Both of them sat at a large sofa, from which a large number of dust was flying around.

“Risako is even more suspicious. Why don’t she come to me directly, but asking you to come? Is this an illicit love affair between Sou and Fuji? She could have more lively sex with me if she wanted though. Or is she the type to get heated up after failure?”

“She’s a friend”

Kougen dutifully answered, Minato once again, looked in his direction with a teasing face.

“Yes, of course, you guys are not doing it. What an honest person. However, Kougen. As a man, you should have a little vanity. Aside from her personality, Risako’s face and body is top tier”

“Minato-kun. Please stop joking around and tell me. Did Risako-san come here?”

Kougen came up with several possibilities. Even if Risako couldn’t usually stomach him, she might have come here earlier. There shouldn’t be such a possibility, but there was no other possible source of information leak.

However, Minato ignored Kougen, and suddenly without any apparent reason, turned his attention to Yuuki.

“Hey, Akabane Yuuki. Your grandma passed away 5 years ago from acute renal failure right? What did the head temple do that time? He only came to the funeral right? Did he become as desperate as he is now?”

Yuuki was reasonably surprised when his name was called upon. Moreover, Minato even guessed his grandma’s cause of death that he even had forgotten himself.

“Whom did you hear that from!”

“I just read your mind. Otherwise, do you think that your grandma’s cause of death is so popular?”

Facing Yuuki who had gone pale, Minato sat back on the sofa while raising his leg with his bossy face.

“About Risako’s niece, it’s not my business you see. Even Risako is turning away from her religion when her relative’s life is threatened. What a cheap devotion. That’s why, as a punishment, her niece is going to die”

“Did you seriously mean that?”

“Die unreasonably? So what. Nowadays, there are lots of people who is in the same circumstances everyday. Most of deaths are reasonable. If there really is a cause worthy of death, it would be happiness”

“Even though you know Saya-chan?”

“I only saw her Shichigosan[15] pictures once, you know? I’m not a lolicon. While I’m acquainted with the moneylender oldman for a long time, we never went to visit any suspicious place. Despite being in that business, he’s surprisingly loyal.”

Yuuki who had been silent all this time, stood up in impatience. Regardless of the subject of the talk, whether his family or others, for Yuuki, Minato’s rudeness already far crossing the line.

“You’re the worst! Just for rejecting the request, it doesn’t mean that you can say such a bad thing!”

“What? I thought you’d be agree with me”

“There’s no way!”

“Really? Then, are you here to help someone? You aren’t, are you?”

Minato treated Yuuki who stood up while looking for his charm lightly; he even shoved a finger to Yuuki’s nose.

“You want to resolve this incident so that you can be admired by everyone. With solving such a big case, even those old man would not dare to say anything else about you. This incident is perfect for that purpose. So much for a good will. That kind of person, does he has the right to preach me? Don’t be nosy, you damn brat”

“Minato-kun, that’s too much”

Kougen entered between them, as he couldn’t bear to watch further.

Hmph, Minato only let away such sound from his nose.

“Minato”

Kougen, once again, slowly called him with a serious look.

“Please listen to me”

Kougen’s tone turned unusually strong.

Even Minato who raised his feet at the table, couldn’t help but to direct his eyes to him.

Among the noise of the city, a sirens of ambulance rang somewhere.

“She’s not going to die instantly. We still have 5 days. Is it foolish of me to think that we can do something to that creature before that time limit? Is it just my wishful thought that you’d lend your strength?”

“... the result, how if you cannot seal that creature before five days?” Kougen seemed to be at lost of words, in the face of the concise response of Minato.

“I’m fine with your cheesy humanism, but you must realise the other end of your cup. You do know that if you fail, the cost wouldn’t be a single miko, don’t you?”

Minato said so quietly. His playful atmosphere had flown somewhere, and he decided to face Kougen with serious answers.

Silence descended.

As the night fall, the neon sign outside were reflected inside, as there was no curtain at the window.

The noisy sound of the city was getting louder, yet the siren couldn’t be heard anymore, instead, there was the sound of barks and noisy outdoor units.

The silence broke before long.

“The request is to help Yamagami Saya, and seal the creature, am I right?”

Kougen stared at Minato in shock.

“Are you going to take it?”

He sounded genuinely happy, Minato wore a disinterested face once more,

before getting back to his sofa.

“For the leaders of both Fuji and Sou to seek for my help, it’s not everyday occurrence. I can’t help but to take it. Don’t you think so?”

Kougen smiled happily to the news, while Minato was slightly laughing. Only Yuuki was keeping his natural face expressionless.

“Suit yourself. I’m going out”

“Is he scared of me?”

“There’s no way. He hates you”

“Is it? I am interested in him since I heard that he’s the genius boy from Sou Sect. I bet it’s only a manufactured topic”

“Wha!! Come and say that again!”

“Yuuki-kun’s power is real. I can guarantee you this”

“Then, you can be a little useful” Minato, who saw that Yuuki was furious, stood up properly from the sofa.

“Let’s negotiate. Tell this to RIsako. Since I got nothing from this job. Just the thought of doing this with her is already too scary”

“This is Fuji’s request. I’m going off”

“Since you guys are the one who come and ask for help. At least, you should do as I say. I hope this can be settled soon. Let’s go, damn brat”

Minato grasped and continued to drag Yuuki’s nape, while heading to the door and said to Kougen.

“I’m going to meet a pretty miko. Aren’t you jealous? If you are, let’s switch. By the way, take care of my answering machine. If the money lender downstairs call, record it. One more thing, the thing that you brought is in the toilet, you can have it back. She might vomit a little, but don’t mind it”

Kougen who realized all this, dropped his shoulder as if he was tired.

“The earlier pretend was due to this?”

“Of course. Do you actually think that I’m a youkai? I was just playing with your

cheap narcissism”

After saying that, Minato closed the door with a bang.

## Part 5[[edit](#)]

Why am I being locked here. Even though she thought of that, the thought of running away never passed through her mind. Anxiety grew in her heart as a normal person would.

In a sturdy wooden prison, Saya quietly sat staring at herself.

There was a light coming from the window up high near the ceiling, shining upon her.

When she opened her eyes, and gazed upon the surroundings. She could only see nothing but grids of wooden walls with thick plaster.

On her right hand, there was the eerie ancient character still written on it.

The hope of the people, in order to seal that horrible spectre that had devastated several village, a seal was put up with the cost of hundreds of life, Saya thought of this and shuddered involuntarily.

It was too repulsive, but she seized the opportunity to cut off her thought and drove such evil thought away by shaking her head immediately.

Just a few more days and she would be sanctified, and her body will become a worthy sacrifice. There was no other choice but to sit and wait now.

She was just waiting for the time to pass. When she began to doze off, she heard a sound from above. From the window near the ceiling. After she looked up and discerned the silhouette behind the backlight, she saw a young man sitting by the window.

He was swinging his leg, as if looking down to ridicule Saya from a higher ground.

“Hey”

He shook his hand lightly to make a short greeting.

Her drowsiness was blown away at once. Who the hell is he, why did he come here, how did he manage to snuck in, or what happened to the grate of the window, all these questions came at once.



“Both the security and the prison are so lax. It’s as if they’re saying, ‘please flee at any time’”

“Wh-Who are you?”

“Kujou Minato”

The man who called himself as Minato jumped out from the window edge. Although there was 4 meters high, he landed softly.

“To you guys, I’m the zero ability guy or the pitiful powerless guy”

He came to Saya steadily. Whiel Saya was trying to move away from Minato, although she didn’t manage to increase their distance as the prison space was small, the girl seemed to be frozen just at the sight of him.

“hmp”

Minato looked at Saya from top to bottom, and let out a disappointed sigh. Somehow it was a very humiliating feeling for Saya, she lowered down her tone and ask him.

“What do you mean just now? No, what is your purpose of coming here?”

Minato looked around from the gap of the woods, and began to talk without concealing his voice.

“I have had a beauty coming to me to save her niece from being a sacrificial tool to seal a spectre”

“Risa-anesama?”

Minato did not answer that, instead he put his finger in front of his mouth.

“There are 3 ways for you to save you”

Saya got even confused. For all the knowledge in Onmyoudou, there was no other choice for them but to seal the spectre. For some random guy to say that there are 3 ways to avoid that, she couldn’t just believe him. She couldn’t think of it, but as a nonsense.

“Wait. So what are you going to do with the spectre?”

“Who knows? The request didn’t include that part”

His content of reply was irresponsible in itself. Saya was raged.

“Then, there’s no way I can leave! If I don’t seal that with my life, there will be more life to be at danger you know!? I can’t agree to such thing!”

“Of course you are. You’re so stubborn. Since the one who need to clean up the mess seems to be me, I don’t want to do such a troublesome ting. Then, there’s only one way left. This is even simpler. I can do it now, and your consent is not particularly needed anyway”

Minato kept walking to approach Saya. Saya had her defence up as she felt something bad was coming her way. She was wondering if she need to scream for help.

In the first place, Saya was supposed to call for help immediately instead of listening to Minato. Still, she was caught off guard as she was told that she might be able to survive.

“Then let me ask you a question now. Why don’t you immediately seal that creature with your body now?”

Should I say that I know that, or should I answer that honestly.

“That... Now, my body is now at an impure stage”

“To put it simply, it’s physiological”

Saya said so with a blushed face, while Minato walked towards her with grinning face. It was a matter of time till Saya was cornered and lose her chance of escaping.

“In other words. If you have an eternally impure body, the qualification of becoming a sacrifice is eliminated regardless of your will”

As she realized what Minato meant, Saya changed her complexion while trying to escape. Minato react roughly in the split second to grab her wrist and twisted it behind him.

“Ugh”

Her other free hand tried to slap Minato, was also grabbed by him against her will. They were locked in a position that seemed like embracing each other, Saya tried to break free desperately, but she was no match against a man’s power.

“I thought you’re a sheltered young lady, but as expected, you still understand what I mean”

Saya twisted her hand, trying to free her hand which was grabbed by force. The man raised his eyebrow whilst being a little grumpy.

“Why didn’t you call for help? First and foremost, weren’t you supposed to scream for help?”

Saya turned away, but she was restricted. When Minato closed in to her neck and breathed on her skin, she felt disgusted.

Minato held both Saya’s hand overhead, and roughly forward himself.

“What’s wrong? Isn’t it easy to scream? Your mouth is still closed”

Saya could not speak anything but to grit the back of her teeth.

“If you don’t know why you didn’t do that. I will spell it out for you. Because you don’t want to die. Because you don’t want to be a sacrifice. Yet, you forced yourself to accept the ideal, to accept the sacrificial role. Were you accepted this role, you’d die in a good cause. For your own idealism. However, despite maintaining your own idealism, you still can be relieved of this duty. Were your virginity taken away by force, you also will not be blamed for it. It would be due to the lax of security that allowed a suspicious person intrude into the mansion”

“Then, aren’t you also trying to justify your own death! You seducer!”

“It’s the first time in my whole life to be called seducer. As expected of miko-san, you really use different words. However, the words that I want to hear is nothing of such. I want to hear your real wish. There’s no denying that you’re not satisfied with your current position. Because of some stupid youngster, you ended up becoming a sacrifice. Are you going to sit down and let that happen?”

“...is there....”

“What is it?”

“There isn’t any choice, is there!”

It was a scream close to a cry.

“This barrier was made at the cost of hundreds of miko’s life!”

Saya said so while pointing to her right hand with the bonji character.

“For me... For me to want to be saved and come out of this mess alive, isn’t that an unforgivable selfishness!”

“Is it selfish to wish for your own life? You’ve been trained as a miko for more than 10 years, and is this the end that you’re going to have?”

“That is my mission when I decided to live by the path of Onmyoudou as a miko. Please don’t touch me anymore. I will call for help if you persist.”

“Ah, I see. Then, let’s do it this way”

Minato forced one of his finger to Saya’s mouth.

“Agh”

Saya resisted with all her might when she realized that the finger of a man was in her mouth.

However, it was impossible for her to escape, or even to divert face, while her saliva starting to seep out from the edge of her mouth. Because of that, Saya became increasingly ashamed.

While the girl was moaning in pain, Minato didn’t move a bit, he explored her mouth with his finger. After he found his objective, he pulled out forcibly from her mouth.

It was Saya’s small tongue.

“If you’re so determined to die, then bit your tongue here and now. Since the one that can be used for the replacement of the shimenawa is only your body and not your soul, even your virgin corpse will do. It’s not like it’s impossible if you’re dead. Any way your body is not that great to my liking”

Pinched by the tongue, Saya’s face and mouth cannot be moved, she was stiffened and hints of fear was reflected in her eyes.

“What’s the matter? Do it quickly, or do you think I’m joking?”

When he released his finger from her tongue, he grasped Saya’s white clothing and roughly pull it down. The girl’s right shoulder and breast were exposed, Saya got even more stiffened. He blocked her mouth to prevent her from screaming,

Minato looked into her frightened eyes.

“Don’t even think to scream”

After he released his hand from her mouth, he put his finger back into her mouth.

“So, let me see.. Should I do you now?”

There wasn’t any hint of jokes from Minato. Saya closed her mouth tightly while awaiting her fate. From the edge of her mouth a blood started to drip. Albeit only a little bit.

Not only that she was caught unprepared. She didn’t have that kind of determination to bite off her tongue. When Saya slumped down, Minato released her tongue. Then Saya’s tears began to flow freely, some of which dropped on the floor.

“... don’t want. I don’t want to die...”

“That’s right. That’s your true wish. There’s nothing to be ashamed for. There isn’t anyone who will give up her life so easily. Not only you, this is normal for most people”

When Minato’s hands who had been grabbing her hands were released, Saya’s body collapsed on the spot promptly. On top of that, her tears still flowing down endlessly.

“Do you want to live?”

While fixing the disturbed clothes, Minato quietly waited for her. He didn’t get any immediate answer from Saya, but she nodded weakly soon after.

“I want... to live”

That was the first time she said so herself.

At the same time, she felt the guilt made her trembling as if she was freezing. Minato placed his hand on her head. On top of giving a friendly face, he was smiling warmly.

“I understand your feeling. Then, let’s try to do something within these 3 days. Since there’s no point in waiting for death, we should use the time to counter

the danger if you wish to live”

Minato stood up and put up a happy smile. He looked like a playful boy, a different look than the one he had up to now.

“Do something in 3 days?”

Saya cluelessly listened to Minato dutifully.

Minato was saying something which was really hard to believe.

“We’ll beat that spectre”

Minato didn’t realise the meaning fo his words.

Spectre’s presence that was born to be a deity. It couldn’t be compared to human’s power, onmyoudou had concluded as such since hundreds of years ago. It was the same even for the head of the temple. Moreover, it was supposed to be more difficult to do in modern era, where spiritual power had weakened compared to the old days.

Yet for the first time they met, for some reason, Saya was willing to try to believe in the man who is most unlikely to have the credit to do that.

He said to Saya to follow him. It was decided that she was going to follow him until further decision.

Minato faced behind after he passed a change of clothes to Saya. In the meantime, Saya changed her clothes. Even if he is Minato, he still had some decency when opposite sex is changing her clothes. Even though the prison was dim, there was enough light to see, and he still could hear the sound of clothes shifting despite not seeing it.

“There’s not much time”

Minato faced the other way while saying so. Saya reluctantly turned away from Minato and began to take off her miko attire.

“Ouch”

The pain came from her chest, she groaned involuntarily.

“What’s wrong?”

“No-Nothing”



Since Minato showed signs of turning his face, Saya rushingly put on her haori again.

Saya looked at the source of the pain in her chest, while worrying about her back side (Minato). It probably scratched when Minato treated her roughly. There was a shallow wound along her collarbone to the bottom of her breast.

There wasn't any scar, but there were faint traces of blood. It wasn't supposed to make anyone feel guilty, but for some reason, that wound managed to increase her sense of guilt.

Saya shook her head to shake off the lingering doubts. I'm sure this young man must have been a reliable person. He's not a bad guy, perhaps. He even said that I can live with a kind eyes. That must be the true self of him. I'm sure I can trust him.

While repeating such things in her head, she took the change of clothes that Minato prepared in her hands. However, Saya tilted her head after she saw the clothes.

"These look familiar to me"

"Well, of course, I took it from your room after all"

"There's also underwear"

"I'm surprised that you have some daring styled ones, too, though it doesn't suit your face. But, it's not good to just have it"

The trust almost collapsed in just tens of seconds.

## Part 6[\[edit\]](#)

(to be continued)

## Translator's Notes[\[edit\]](#)

- [1] Hito-shirazu: literally, the people who knows. In the context of this novel, it means the people who knows about the existence of the specters.
- [2] Yahata no Yabushirazu: a forest in Chiba Prefecture which is famous for Spirited-away legend, it's a confined area (just like in the story)
- [3] Shimenawa: the rope that usually tightened around a sacred area (Shintoism)
- [4] Shide or Kamishide: zigzag-shaped paper streamer often used to adorn Shinto-related objects
- [5] Miko: Shinto's shrine maiden
- [6] Azusayumi: Catalpa bow
- [8] Jindaimoji: the small character written on the rope, it's written in ancient Japanese characters
- [9] alphabet here refer to Japanese's furigana
- [10] Kaonashi-sama literally: faceless lord
- [11] Kuchinashi literally: mouthless
- [12] Bowing: in a manner like dogeza
- [13] Exorcist and marijuana have the same spelling in Japan: Taima
- [14] Youkai: monster
- [15] Shichigosan: Japanese children's festival